

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for establishing a computer-enhanced conference call between a plurality of users, comprising:
 - detecting a computer-enhanced conference call event that was previously configured by an initiating user;
 - contacting conference users associated with the computer-enhanced conference call event;
 - receiving at least one response from the conference users;
 - establishing a conference call between the initiating user and the conference users based on the at least one received response; and
 - establishing a collaboration between the initiating user and conference users that are authorized to participate in the collaboration.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein detecting a computer-enhanced conference call event comprises:
 - scanning a data structure for the computer-enhanced conference call event.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the data structure comprises a calendar application associated with the initiating user.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the computer-enhanced conference call event comprises a trigger indicating a proposed computer-enhanced conference call previously scheduled by the initiating user.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the proposed computer-enhanced conference call identifies the conference users and identifying conference users comprises:

collecting identifiers for the conference users from a first data structure corresponding to the computer-enhanced conference call event; and

collecting contact information for the conference users from a second data structure based on the conference user identifiers.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the first data structure comprises a calendar application and the second data structure comprises an address book listing at least the conference users and their corresponding contact information.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein contacting the conference users comprises:

collecting contact information associated with the conference users; and

establishing a communication connection with the conference users using the contact information.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the contact information comprises telephone numbers associated with the conference users and establishing a communication connection comprises:

dialing out to conference users using telephone numbers corresponding to the conference users.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein contacting the conference users comprises:

sending notifications of a computer-enhanced conference call request to the conference users.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein establishing a conference call comprises:

connecting calls to devices of conference users based on responses to the notifications.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein connecting comprises:

bridging calls to devices of the initiating user and conference users that accepted the computer-enhanced conference call request so that the initiating user and the conference users that accepted the computer-enhanced conference call request may conduct a conference call; and

providing the initiating user with notification of any conference user that declined

the computer-enhanced conference call request.

12. The method of claim 11, comprising processing a conference user declining the computer-enhanced conference call request by at least one of:

receiving a communication from a conference user to record a message for subsequent play back to the initiating user;

receiving a communication declining the request without any further processing by a conference user;

receiving a communication from a conference user to set an alternate contact telephone number; and

receiving a communication from a conference user to set a period of time in which the conference user is to be contacted again.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein at least one of the calls is forwarded to a preferred device of one of the conference users.

14. The method of claim 9, wherein establishing a collaboration comprises:

determining whether conference users that accept the computer-enhanced conference call request are authorized to participate in the collaboration; and

launching collaboration software corresponding to the initiating user and authorized conference users so that the initiating users and authorized conference

users may participate in the collaboration.

15. The method of claim 9, wherein the sending comprises:
retrieving data corresponding to the conference users;
selecting devices associated with the conference users to receive the notification based on the retrieved data; and
providing the notification to the selected devices for display on the selected devices.

16. The method of claim 1, comprising receiving a designation, from at least one of the conference users, of a preferred device to participate in the collaboration.

17. A method for establishing a computer-enhanced conference call between a plurality of users, comprising:
detecting a computer-enhanced conference call event that was previously configured by an initiating user;
contacting conference users associated with the computer-enhanced conference call event;
receiving at least one response from the conference users;
bridging calls to devices of the initiating user and the conference users based on the at least one received response, wherein at least one of the calls is forwarded to a

preferred device of one of the conference users; and

establishing a collaboration between the initiating user and conference users that are authorized to participate in the collaboration.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein detecting a computer-enhanced conference call event comprises:

scanning a data structure for the computer-enhanced conference call event.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the data structure comprises a calendar application associated with the initiating user.

20. The method of claim 17, wherein the computer-enhanced conference call event comprises a trigger indicating a proposed computer-enhanced conference call previously scheduled by the initiating user.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the proposed computer-enhanced conference call identifies the conference users and identifying conference users includes:

collecting identifiers for the conference users from a first data structure corresponding to the computer-enhanced conference call event; and

collecting contact information for the conference users from a second data structure based on the conference user identifiers.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein the first data structure comprises a calendar application and the second data structure comprises an address book listing at least the conference users and their corresponding contact information.

23. The method of claim 17, wherein contacting the conference users comprises:

collecting contact information associated with the conference users; and
establishing a communication connection with the conference users using the contact information.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the contact information comprises telephone numbers associated with the conference users and establishing a communication connection comprises:

dialing out to conference users using telephone numbers corresponding to the conference users.

25. The method of claim 17, wherein contacting the conference users comprises:

sending notifications of a computer-enhanced conference call request to the conference users.

26. The method of claim 25, comprising processing a conference user declining the computer-enhanced conference call request by at least one of:

receiving a communication from a conference user to record a message for subsequent play back to the initiating user;

receiving a communication declining the request without any further processing by a conference user;

receiving a communication from a conference user to set an alternate contact telephone number; and

receiving a communication from a conference user to set a period of time in which the conference user is to be contacted again.

27. The method of claim 25, wherein establishing a collaboration comprises:

determining whether conference users that accept the computer-enhanced conference call request are authorized to participate in the collaboration; and

launching collaboration software corresponding to the initiating user and authorized conference users so that the initiating users and authorized conference users may participate in the collaboration.

28. The method of claim 25, wherein the sending comprises:

retrieving data corresponding to the conference users;

selecting devices associated with the conference users to receive the notification

based on the retrieved data; and

providing the notification to the selected devices for display on the selected devices.

29. The method of claim 17, comprising receiving a designation, from at least one of the conference users, of a preferred device to participate in the collaboration.

30. A method for establishing a computer-enhanced conference call, comprising:

receiving information pertaining to a computer-enhanced conference call between a plurality of conference users, including an initiating user, that was setup by the initiating user;

sending a notification of a computer-enhanced conference call request to a device associated with one of the plurality of conference users;

receiving a response to the notification;

establishing a conference call between the initiating user and the conference users based on the response; and

establishing a collaboration between the initiating user and conference users that are authorized to participate in the collaboration based on the response.

31. An apparatus for establishing a computer-enhanced conference call

between a plurality of users, including an initiating user, comprising:

means for detecting a computer-enhanced conference call event that was previously configured by the initiating user;

means for contacting conference users associated with the computer-enhanced conference call event;

means for receiving at least one response from the conference users

means for establishing a conference call between the initiating user and the conference users based on the at least one received response; and

means for establishing a collaboration between the initiating user and conference users that are authorized to participate in the collaboration.

32. The apparatus of claim 31, wherein the means for detecting a computer-enhanced conference call event comprises:

means for scanning a data structure for the computer-enhanced conference call event.

33. The apparatus of claim 32, wherein the data structure comprises a calendar application associated with the initiating user.

34. The apparatus of claim 31, wherein the computer-enhanced conference call event comprises a trigger indicating a proposed computer-enhanced conference call previously scheduled by the initiating user.

35. The apparatus of claim 34, wherein the proposed computer-enhanced conference call identifies the conference users and means for identifying conference users comprises:

means for collecting identifiers for the conference users from a first data structure corresponding to the computer-enhanced conference call event; and

means for collecting contact information for the conference users from a second data structure based on the conference user identifiers.

36. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the first data structure comprises a calendar application and the second data structure comprises an address book listing at least the conference users and their corresponding contact information.

37. The apparatus of claim 31, wherein the means for contacting the conference users comprises:

means for collecting contact information associated with the conference users;
and

means for establishing a communication connection with the conference users using the contact information.

38. The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the contact information comprises telephone numbers associated with the conference users and the means for establishing a communication connection comprises:

means for dialing out to conference users using telephone numbers corresponding to the conference users.

39. The apparatus of claim 31, wherein the means for contacting the conference users comprises:

means for sending notifications of a computer-enhanced conference call request to the conference users.

40. The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the means for establishing a conference call comprises:

means for connecting calls to devices of conference users based on responses to the notifications.

41. The apparatus of claim 40, wherein the means for connecting comprises:

means for bridging calls to devices of the initiating user and conference users that accepted the computer-enhanced conference call request so that the initiating user and the conference users that accepted the computer-enhanced conference call request may conduct a conference call; and

means for providing the initiating user with notification of any conference user that declined the computer-enhanced conference call request.

42. The apparatus of claim 41, wherein conference users that decline the computer-enhanced conference call request may decline the request by selecting at least one of:

allowing a conference user to record a message for subsequent play back to the initiating user;

declining the request without any further processing by a conference user;

allowing a conference user to set an alternate contact telephone number; and

allowing the conference user to set a period of time in which the conference user is to be contacted again.

43. The apparatus of claim 42, wherein at least one of the calls is forwarded to a preferred device of one of the conference users.

44. The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the means for establishing a collaboration comprises:

means for determining whether conference users that accept the computer-enhanced conference call request are authorized to participate in the collaboration; and

means for launching collaboration software corresponding to the initiating user and authorized conference users so that the initiating users and authorized conference

users may participate in the collaboration.

45. The apparatus of claims 39, wherein the means for sending comprises:

means for retrieving data corresponding to the conference users;

means for selecting devices associated with the conference users to receive the notification based on the retrieved data; and

means for providing the notification to the selected devices for display on the selected devices.

46. The apparatus of claim 31, comprising means for receiving a designation, from at least one of the conference users, of a preferred device to participate in the collaboration.

47. An apparatus for establishing a computer-enhanced conference call between a plurality of users, comprising:

means for detecting a computer-enhanced conference call event that was previously configured by an initiating user;

means for contacting conference users associated with the computer-enhanced conference call event;

means for receiving at least one response from the conference users;

means for bridging calls to devices of the initiating user and the conference users

based on the at least one received response, wherein at least one of the calls is forwarded to a preferred device of one of the conference users; and

means for establishing a collaboration between the initiating user and conference users that are authorized to participate in the collaboration.

48. The apparatus of claim 47, wherein the means for detecting a computer-enhanced conference call event comprises:

means for scanning a data structure for the computer-enhanced conference call event.

49. The apparatus of claim 48, wherein the data structure comprises a calendar application associated with the initiating user.

50. The apparatus of claim 47, wherein the computer-enhanced conference call event comprises a trigger indicating a proposed computer-enhanced conference call previously scheduled by the initiating user.

51. The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the proposed computer-enhanced conference call identifies the conference users and means for identifying conference users includes:

means for collecting identifiers for the conference users from a first data structure corresponding to the computer-enhanced conference call event; and

means for collecting contact information for the conference users from a second data structure based on the conference user identifiers.

52. The apparatus of claim 51, wherein the first data structure comprises a calendar application and the second data structure comprises an address book listing at least the conference users and their corresponding contact information.

53. The apparatus of claim 47, wherein the means for contacting the conference users comprises:

means for collecting contact information associated with the conference users;
and

means for establishing a communication connection with the conference users using the contact information.

54. The apparatus of claim 53, wherein the contact information comprises telephone numbers associated with the conference users and the means for establishing a communication connection comprises:

means for dialing out to conference users using telephone numbers corresponding to the conference users.

55. The apparatus of claim 47, wherein the means for contacting the conference users comprises:

means for sending notifications of a computer-enhanced conference call request to the conference users.

56. The apparatus of claim 55, wherein conference users that decline the computer-enhanced conference call request may decline the request by selecting at least one of:

- allowing a conference user to record a message for subsequent play back to the initiating user;

- declining the request without any further processing by a conference user;

- allowing a conference user to set an alternate contact telephone number; and

- allowing the conference user to set a period of time in which the conference user is to be contacted again.

57. The apparatus of claim 55, wherein the means for establishing a collaboration comprises:

- means for determining whether conference users that accept the computer-enhanced conference call request are authorized to participate in the collaboration; and

- means for launching collaboration software corresponding to the initiating user and authorized conference users so that the initiating users and authorized conference users may participate in the collaboration.

58. The apparatus of claim 55, wherein the means for sending comprises:

means for retrieving data corresponding to the conference users;

means for selecting devices associated with the conference users to receive the notification based on the retrieved data; and

means for providing the notification to the selected devices for display on the selected devices.

59. The apparatus of claim 47, comprising means for receiving a designation, from at least one of the conference users, of a preferred device to participate in the collaboration.

60. An apparatus for establishing a computer-enhanced conference call, comprising:

means for receiving information pertaining to a computer-enhanced conference call between a plurality of conference users, including an initiating user, that was setup by the initiating user;

means for sending a notification of a computer-enhanced conference call request to a device associated with one of the plurality of conference users;

means for receiving a response to the notification;

means for establishing a conference call between the initiating user and conference users based on the response; and

means for establishing a collaboration between the initiating user and conference users that are authorized to participate in the collaboration based on the

response.

61. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for establishing a computer-enhanced conference call between a plurality of users, the method comprising:

- detecting a computer-enhanced conference call event that was previously configured by an initiating user;

- contacting conference users associated with the computer-enhanced conference call event;

- receiving at least one response from the conference users;

- establishing a conference call between the initiating user and the conference users based on the at least one received response; and

- establishing a collaboration between the initiating user and conference users that are authorized to participate in the collaboration.

62. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for establishing a computer-enhanced conference call between a plurality of users, the method comprising:

- detecting a computer-enhanced conference call event that was previously configured by an initiating user;

- contacting conference users associated with the computer-enhanced conference call event;

receiving at least one response from the conference users

bridging calls to devices of the initiating user and the conference users based on the at least one received response, wherein at least one of the calls is forwarded to a preferred device of one of the conference users; and

establishing a collaboration between the initiating user and conference users that are authorized to participate in the collaboration.

63. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for establishing a computer-enhanced conference call, the method comprising:

receiving information pertaining to a computer-enhanced conference call between a plurality of conference users, including an initiating user, that was setup by the initiating user;

sending a notification of a computer-enhanced conference call request to a device associated with one of the plurality of conference users;

receiving a response to the notification;

establishing a conference call between the initiating user and the plurality of conference users based on the response; and

establishing a collaboration between the initiating user and conference users that are authorized to participate in the collaboration based on the response.

64. A method for participating in a computer-enhanced conference call automatically established by at least one or more communication entity, comprising:

scheduling a computer-enhanced conference call at a predetermined time using a calendar application, wherein scheduling includes identifying conference users that are to participate in the computer-enhanced conference call and identifying conference users that are authorized to participate in a collaboration corresponding to the computer-enhanced conference call; and

at the predetermined time:

receiving an indication that a computer-enhanced conference call has been configured in accordance with the scheduled computer-enhanced conference call, and

receiving an indication that at least one conference user has either joined or declined to join the computer-enhanced conference call.

65. An apparatus for participating in a computer-enhanced conference call automatically established by at least one or more communication entity, comprising:

means for scheduling a computer-enhanced conference call at a predetermined time using a calendar application, wherein the means for scheduling includes means for identifying conference users that are to participate in the computer-enhanced

conference call and means for identifying conference users that are authorized to participate in a collaboration corresponding to the computer-enhanced conference call;

means for receiving, at the predetermined time, an indication that a computer-enhanced conference call has been configured in accordance with the scheduled computer-enhanced conference call; and

means for receiving an indication that at least one conference user has either joined or declined to join the computer-enhanced conference call.

66. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for participating in a computer-enhanced conference call automatically established by at least one or more communication entity, the method comprising:

scheduling a computer-enhanced conference call at a predetermined time using a calendar application, wherein scheduling includes identifying conference users that are to participate in the computer-enhanced conference call and identifying conference users that are authorized to participate in a collaboration corresponding to the computer-enhanced conference call; and

at the predetermined time:

receiving an indication that a computer-enhanced conference call has been configured in accordance with the scheduled computer-enhanced conference call, and

receiving an indication that at least one conference user has either joined or declined to join the computer-enhanced conference call.

67. An apparatus for establishing a computer-enhanced conference call between a plurality of users, comprising:

- a first server operable to detect a computer-enhanced conference call event that was previously configured by an initiating user;
- a second server operable to contact conference users associated with the computer-enhanced conference call event; and
- a conference bridge operable to bridge calls to devices of the initiating user and the conference users based on responses from the conference users, wherein at least one of the calls is forwarded to a preferred device of one of the conference users, and
- a collaboration is established between the initiating user and conference users that are authorized to participate in the collaboration.

68. A method for establishing a computer-enhanced conference call between a plurality of users, comprising:

- detecting a computer-enhanced conference call event set up by an initiating user;
- contacting conference users associated with the computer-enhanced conference call event;
- receiving at least one response from the conference users;
- establishing a conference call between the initiating user and the conference users based on the at least one received response; and

establishing a collaboration between the initiating user and conference users that are authorized to participate in the collaboration.

69. A method for establishing a computer-enhanced conference call between a plurality of users, comprising:

detecting a computer-enhanced conference call event set up by an initiating user;

contacting conference users associated with the computer-enhanced conference call event;

receiving at least one response from the conference users;

bridging calls to devices of the initiating user and the conference users based on the at least one received response, wherein at least one of the calls is forwarded to a preferred device of one of the conference users; and

establishing a collaboration between the initiating user and conference users that are authorized to participate in the collaboration.